

of the Rhine and its bridge-heads. The yearning for this solid pledge of security was frustrated by the Anglo-American veto, and the compensating Anglo-American guarantee collapsed with the repudiation of Wilson's signature by his fellow countrymen. The vacuum, for which France was not responsible, was never filled. During the Locarno *quinquennium* it seemed as if she was converted to the gospel of reconciliation, but the change was only skin deep. Clemenceau spoke of the comedy of Locarno and denounced Briand as the leading light of French defeatism. Beyond the Rhine the political position of Stresemann was equally weak. The League was widely regarded in Germany as a "Committee of Conquerors," and the smart of defeat was still very keen. Locarno was a failure, not necessarily because it was based on wrong principles but because it was not implemented by larger measures of conciliation.

If there was too little conciliation during the Weimar era to win the average German to the new order, there was too little firmness when Hitler came to the helm. Despite his first pacific assertions there was no valid reason to suppose that he had renounced the ambitions enshrined in *Mein Kampf*, or that he would fail in due course to use the armaments he was piling up. The Fuhrer was young Germany's answer to Versailles, his name a symbol of revolt against foreign dictation. Austen Chamberlain and Winston Churchill called attention to the danger. That the British public was sick of war and opposed to expensive rearmament during the early years of the Nazi regime was realized and confessed by Mr. Baldwin; but it is part of the responsibility of a Government to see further ahead than the man in the street, and to take the nation into its confidence on the vital issue of national security. The

policy of appeasement was honourably meant and energetically<sup>^</sup> though not very skilfully, pursued. It came too late to bear fruit, for it was interpreted by the cynical Dictators as a sign of weakness which encouraged them to go ahead. Only force, or the threat of force, they believed, could win for their peoples their place in the sun. If Dr. Rauschning's reports of Hitler's conversations shortly before and shortly after his accession to power are substantially correct, there was never a chance of satisfying the new Napoleon. None of our Prime Ministers or Foreign Secretaries before March 1939, except perhaps Mr. Eden, seemed to realize the utter ruthlessness and systematic duplicity of the autocrats in Berlin and Rome. <c  
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